

What is claimed is:

1. A method of controlling image data transfer between a server storing image data and a client connected to the server via a network and receiving the image data by accessing the server, the image-data transfer control  
5 method comprising the steps of:

measuring a transfer rate of the network at the time the client requests transfer of image data sets from the server; and

10 determining the number of the image data sets to be sent to the client in response to the transfer request, based on the transfer rate and a permitted transfer time determined in advance.

15 2. An image-data transfer control method as defined in Claim 1, further comprising the step of transferring the image data sets whose number has been determined from the server to the client.

20 3. An image-data transfer control method as defined in Claim 2, wherein the step of transferring is the step of transferring the image data sets whose number has been determined from the server to the client, based on priority of the image data sets whose transfer is requested.

25 4. An image-data transfer control method as defined in Claim 2, further comprising the step of transferring, from the server to the client, low volume data sets of a remaining portion of the requested image data sets excluding

the image data sets whose transfer from the server to the client has been determined.

5        5. An image-data transfer control method as defined in Claim 4, further comprising the step of transferring from the server to the client, in the case where transfer of the image data sets corresponding to the low volume data sets is requested, the image data sets corresponding to the low volume data sets whose transfer is requested.

10       6. An image-data transfer control method as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 5, further comprising the step of transferring to the client a message notifying that the number of the image data sets to be transferred is 0 in the case where the number of the image data sets to be transferred has been determined to be 0.

15       7. An image-data transfer control method as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 5, further comprising the step of transferring information representing the transfer rate to the client.

20       8. An image-data transfer control method as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 5, wherein the image data sets are thumbnail image data for displaying, on the client, thumbnail images comprising images represented by the image data sets.

25       9. An apparatus for controlling image data transfer between a server storing image data and a client connected to the server via a network and receiving the image data

by accessing the server, the image-data transfer control apparatus comprising:

means for measuring a transfer rate of the network at the time the client requests transfer of image data sets from the server; and

means for determining the number of the image data sets to be transferred to the client in response to the transfer request, based on the transfer rate and a permitted transfer time determined in advance.

10. An image-data transfer control apparatus as defined in Claim 9, further comprising means for transferring the image data sets whose number has been determined from the server to the client.

11. An image-data transfer control apparatus as defined in Claim 10, wherein the means for transferring transfers the image data sets whose number has been determined from the server to the client, based on priority of the image data sets whose transfer is requested.

12. An image-data transfer control apparatus as defined in Claim 10, wherein the means for transferring transfers, from the server to the client, low volume data sets of a remaining portion of the requested image data sets excluding the image data sets whose transfer from the server to the client has been determined.

13. An image-data transfer control apparatus as defined in Claim 12, wherein the means for transferring

transfers, from the server to the client, the image data sets corresponding to the low volume data sets when transfer of the image data sets corresponding to the low volume data sets is requested.

5           14. An image-data transfer control apparatus as defined in any one of Claims 9 to 13, further comprising means for sending a message to the client notifying that the number of the image data sets is 0 in the case where the number of the image data sets has been determined to be 0.

10           15. An image-data transfer control apparatus as defined in any one of Claims 9 to 13, further comprising means for transferring information representing the transfer rate to the client.

15           16. An image-data transfer control apparatus as defined in any one of Claims 9 to 13, wherein the image data sets are thumbnail image data for displaying, on the client, thumbnail images comprising images represented by the image data sets.

20           17. A computer-readable recording medium storing a program to cause a computer to execute a method of controlling image data transfer between a server storing image data and a client connected to the server via a network and receiving the image data by accessing the server, the  
25           program comprising the procedures of:

measuring a transfer rate of the network at the time

the client requests transfer of image data sets from the server; and

determining the number of the image data sets to be sent to the client in response to the transfer request, based on the transfer rate and a permitted transfer time determined in advance.

18. A computer-readable recording medium as defined in Claim 17, the program further comprising the procedure of transferring the image data sets whose number has been determined from the server to the client.

19. A computer-readable recording medium as defined in Claim 18, wherein the procedure of transferring is the procedure of transferring the image data sets whose number has been determined from the server to the client, based on priority of the image data sets whose transfer is requested.

20. A computer-readable recording medium as defined in Claim 18, the program further comprising the procedure of transferring, from the server to the client, low volume data sets of a remaining portion of the requested image data sets excluding the image data sets whose transfer from the server to the client has been determined.

21. A computer-readable recording medium as defined in Claim 20, the program further comprising the procedure of transferring from the server to the client, in the case where transfer of the image data sets corresponding to the

low volume data sets is requested, the image data sets corresponding to the low volume data sets whose transfer is requested.

22. A computer-readable recording medium as defined  
5 in any one of Claims 17 to 21, the program further comprising the procedure of transferring to the client a message notifying that the number of the image data sets to be transferred is 0 in the case where the number of the image data sets to be transferred has been determined to be 0.

10 23. A computer-readable recording medium as defined in any one of Claims 17 to 21, the program further comprising the procedure of transferring information representing the transfer rate to the client.

15 24. A computer-readable recording medium as defined in any one of Claims 17 to 21, wherein the image data sets are thumbnail image data for displaying, on the client, thumbnail images comprising images represented by the image data sets.